Preschool–Grade 6

Mary Anoints Jesus

Sunday School Lesson for Kindergarten to 2nd Grade, 45 minutes

Main point: Give your best to Jesus.
Bible passage: John 12:1–8. Read it before class.
Memory verse: "Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment." *John 12:3 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible, 3 or 4 small paper cups with something that smells in each (ground cinnamon, an orange peel, a sprig of mint), a paper towel over each cup, 7 paper strips, a marker, tape, crayons, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: fill the smell cups and cover them. Write the memory verse on the 7 paper strips (see part 4). Put bookmarks in your Bible at John 12:3 and John 12:7.

1. Opening game: Guess the Smell (5 minutes)

Kids close their eyes. Hold one cup under each child's nose, lift the paper towel, and let them sniff. They whisper their guess to you. Then show what was in the cup. Do every cup. Ask: *Could you smell it even with your eyes closed? Can a good smell fill a whole room?* Say: "Today we will hear about a gift that made a whole house smell sweet."

2. Bible story: Mary Gives Her Best (10 minutes)

Hold up your Bible open to John 12, so the kids can see the story comes from God's Word. Tell it in your own words:

Jesus had some good friends in a town called **Bethany**: Martha, her sister Mary, and their brother **Lazarus** (John 11:1, 11:5). Lazarus had died, and Jesus raised him from the dead (11:43–44)!

Now it was six days before the **passover**, a big feast of God's people (12:1). Jesus came to Bethany again, and they made Him a **supper**, an evening meal. Martha served the food. Lazarus sat at the table with Jesus (12:2).

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The story continues: **Read John 12:3 from your Bible.** Say: "Mary took a whole pound of **ointment**, a sweet-smelling oil. It was **spikenard**, and it was very costly. That means it cost a lot of money!" Mary **anointed** Jesus' feet. That means she poured the ointment on them. Then she wiped His feet with her hair. And the whole house was filled with the **odour**, the smell, of the ointment (12:3). Everyone in the house could smell Mary's gift!

But one of Jesus' disciples, **Judas Iscariot**, did not like it (12:4). He said, "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?" (12:5). Three hundred **pence** was a lot of money. A worker was paid one penny for a whole day of work (Matthew 20:2). But John tells us Judas did not really care about the poor (John 12:6).

Read John 12:7 from your Bible. Jesus said, "Let her alone." That means, "Leave her alone. Don't fuss at her." Jesus said Mary had kept this "against the day of my burying." Jesus knew that soon He would die and be buried. Mary gave Jesus her very best, and Jesus did not let anyone stop her.

3. Questions to ask (5 minutes)

1. In what town did Mary, Martha and Lazarus live? *(Bethany, John 11:1)*
2. What did Martha do at the supper? *(She served, 12:2)*
3. What did Mary pour on Jesus' feet? *(A pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, 12:3)*
4. What did Mary wipe His feet with? *(Her hair, 12:3)*
5. What filled the whole house? *(The odour, the smell, of the ointment, 12:3)*

4. Memory verse: Fill the House (5 minutes)

Tape the 7 strips up in order: *Then took Mary a pound of ointment / of spikenard, very costly, / and anointed the feet of Jesus, / and wiped his feet with her hair: / and the house was filled / with the odour of the ointment. / John 12:3.* Explain the old words: **ointment** is a sweet-smelling oil; **spikenard** is the kind of ointment; **costly** means it cost a lot; **anointed** means poured it on; **odour** means smell. Read the verse together. Then take one strip away and read it again. Each time a strip comes off, kids take one big sniff, like the house filling up with the smell. Keep going until they can say the whole verse by themselves.

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5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Mary gave Jesus her very best. Jesus gave us His very best too. God loves you very much. But everyone has done wrong things. The Bible calls that sin: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God who came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). A few days after Mary's gift, Jesus died for our sins. He was buried, and He rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3–4)! The Bible tells us how to obey the gospel, the good news about Jesus: 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means we are sorry for our sin and we turn away from it. We are **baptized**, buried all the way under the water, in Jesus' name, so our sins are washed away (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). **Remission** means God takes our sins away. And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, His own Spirit, and we speak in other tongues, words God gives us, just like the believers did in the Bible (Acts 2:4)."

Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.

This week: give Jesus your best. Sing to Him with all your heart, pray to Him, or share something good with someone, and say, "This is for You, Jesus!"

6. Activity (10–15 minutes)

Choose one: the **Mary anoints Jesus word search** (vbshq.com/puzzles/mary-anoints-jesus-word-search), crossword, maze or worksheet, the craft (vbshq.com/crafts/mary-anoints-jesus-craft), or **Sweet Smell Pass:** kids sit in a circle and pass one smell cup while you say, "Pass it, pass it, sweet, sweet smell!" When you say "Stop!", the child holding the cup answers a question from part 3, then takes a sniff and passes it on.

7. Prayer

"Dear Jesus, thank You for giving Your very best for us. Help us give You our best too, with all our hearts. Thank You for loving us and coming to save us. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child asks about Judas: answer simply. Judas was one of Jesus' disciples. John tells us he was a thief and kept the money bag (John 12:6), and that he "should betray him" (12:4), which means he would turn Jesus over to His enemies. That part of the story comes later in the week.

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